

ONE OUT

men on 2nd and 3rd.
first base was open.
one out.
we gave Turner an
intentional walk.
we had a 3 to 2
lead.
last half of the
9th, Simpson on the
mound.
Tanner up.
Simpson let it go.
it was low and
inside.
Tanner tapped it
down to our shortstop,
DeMarco.
perfect double play
ball.
DeMarco gloved it,
flipped it to Johnson
our 2b man.
Johnson touched 2nd
then stood there
holding the ball.
the runners were
steaming around
the bases.
I screamed at Johnson
from the dugout:
"DO SOMETHING WITH THE
GOD DAMNED BALL!"
the whole stadium was
screaming.
Johnson just stood there
with the ball.
then
he fell forward
still holding the ball.
he was
stretched out there.
the winning run
scored.

the dugout emptied out
and we ran
toward Johnson.
we turned him
over.
he wasn't moving.

he looked
dead.
the trainer took
his pulse and
looked at me.
then he started
mouth to mouth.

the announcer asked
if there were a
doctor in the
stands.
two of them came
down.
one of them
was drunk.

the crowd started
coming
out on the field.
the cops pushed
them back.

somebody took the
ball out of Johnson's
hand.

they worked on him
for a long time.
there was a
camera flash.
then the doctor
stood up:

"it's no good.
he's gone."

the stretcher
came out and
we loaded Johnson
onto the stretcher.

somebody threw a
jacket
over his face.

they carried Johnson
off the field
through
the dugout

and into
the dressing room.

I didn't go
in.
I had a cup of water
from the cooler
and
sat on the bench.

Toby the batboy
came over.
"what happened, Mr.
Quinn?" he asked
me.

"our 2nd baseman is
dead, Toby."

"who you going to play
there now?"

"I don't think that's
important," I told
him.

"yes, it is, Mr. Quinn.
we're 2 games out of
first place
going into September."

I got up and went down
the dugout steps
toward the locker room.
Toby followed me.

FOOLING MARIE

he met her at the quarterhorse races, a strawberry
blonde with thin hips, yet well-bosomed; long legs,
pointed nose, flower mouth, dressed in a pink dress,
wearing white high-heeled shoes.
she began asking him various questions about the
horses while looking up at him with her pale blue
eyes ... as if he were a god.

he suggested the bar and they had a drink, then
watched the next race together.
he hit twenty win on a six-to-one shot and she
jumped up and down gleefully.
then she stopped jumping and whispered in his ear:
"you're magic, I want to fuck you!"
he grinned and said, "I'd like to, but when?
Marie ... my wife ... has me timed down to the
minute."
she laughed: "We'll go to a motel, you fool!"

so they cashed the ticket, went out to parking,
got into her car ... "I'll drive you back when
we're finished," she smiled.

they found a motel about a mile and one half
west, she parked, they got out, went in, signed in
for room 302.
they had stopped for a bottle of Jack Daniels
on the way and he took the glasses out of the
cellophane as she undressed, poured two.